

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were originally presented. Then, claims 1, 13, 15, and 20 were amended in response to a 12/03/2003 non-final Office Action.

In the 05/20/2004 final Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 13-19 and rejected claims 1-10, 12, and 20-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hirota (US Patent No. 6,477,437) in view of Cicciarelli (US Patent No. 4,870,591). However, the Examiner stated that claims 1/2/11 and 20/21/30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

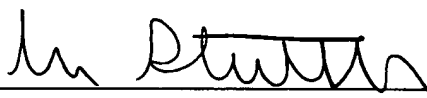
Applicants have canceled claim 2 and claim 11 and amended claim 1 with the limitations of claim 2 and claim 11. Applicants have canceled claim 21 and claim 31 and amended claim 20 with the limitations of claim 21 and claim 31. Thus, all pending claims, namely claims 1, 3-10, 12-20, and 22-29, either are allowed or in a condition for allowance.

In view of the above, reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

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